

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

May 18, 2004

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Shea.

Mayor Baines requested everyone remain standing for a moment of silent prayer and once again I'm asking you to keep in your thoughts and prayers former Alderman Bill Cashin.

The Clerk called the roll. There were thirteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Sysyn, Osborne, Porter, O'Neil, Lopez,
Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Absent: Alderman Guinta

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines request that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments:

Stephanie Lewry, Intown Manchester, (Re: tattoo ordinance) stated:

I'm here to speak about the proposed ordinance to confine tattoo parlors to the Central Business District. I would first like to say that Intown Manchester was not at the table when the original ordinance was drafted two years ago and when we became aware of the proposed ordinance it was at the eleventh hour that we came to the table and I know that we caused some disruption but I did feel like an apology for the inconvenience is in order here, but I needed to explain that we weren't in the initial pool of people who were drafting that ordinance so it will be important that if we go forward with this that we be sure that we get all the parties necessary at the table. For the past two years, Intown Manchester has been on record as opposed to an ordinance that would limit tattoo parlors to the Central Business District only. Development in downtown has not reached its potential. We've been very successful and the reason for our success is quite simple. Our record is one of positive

growth and a worthy investment climate and I ask you why temper with that right now. We are here tonight to encourage thoughtful consideration and healthy debate before passing an ordinance that would confine tattoo parlors to the Central Business District. The community needs additional time to consider the broad spectrum of issues, which include signage, spacing, and the impact of limiting these facilities only to the CBSD. We recommend tabling this issue so that there is time to craft a proposal that will be agreeable to the many parties who are involved in this issue.

Robin Comstock, Chamber of Commerce, (Re: tattoo ordinance) stated:

Thank you for this opportunity tonight. I want to preface my remarks by stating that the Chamber is not opposed to the idea of tattoo parlors within the City. We understand that given the reason court decision that various organizations in the community must work together to draft a plan that will allow tattoo parlors to enter the City. At the same time, we must work together to maintain a positive family-friendly image that will continue to promote our downtown as a destination center and a draw. The Chamber has worked very hard with the Mayor's Office and the Board of Aldermen to perpetuate a new image for our downtown and I know all of us share a common interest in maintaining what we have worked so hard to achieve in the last decade. In the interest of doing so the Chamber of Commerce along with its 1,100 business members from throughout the community request that the Board of Aldermen table this bill tonight and bring it back for a vote at the June 1st Board meeting. We understand that the legal guidelines set by the recent court decision will allow the Board of Aldermen to closely study all the actions for two more weeks before making a final recommendation to the public. We believe these two weeks could be vital to ensuring that all parties who have a vested interest in the issue are able to adequately participate in the legislative process. I know that Alderman Gatsas, for example, raised a concern at the committee meeting last night stating that no one brought forward any objections to tattoo parlors two years ago until the last minute and he would not like to see that repeated. This is why we are here tonight asking you to slow the process down just a little so that we may work with you during the next two weeks to avoid unnecessary last minute confusion. Reviewing this proposal for two more weeks will not in any way hinder the process, it will still allow the proposal to go to public hearing well before the court ordered deadline and it will show that everyone has been able to voice their concerns in a timely fashion. Thank you very much again for the opportunity.

Leo Pepino, 73 Walnut Street, Manchester, NH (Re: committee report) stated:

What I'd like to address is the letter that I sent to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen dated September 18, 2003 on the World War II medal. I introduced the same legislation in Concord...right now, it's passed the House, passed the Senate, waiting for the Governor to sign it. But, rather than a medal...the expenses were kind of high...and I'd ask the City to do the same thing...the medal are about \$8.00 apiece...the best certificate you can buy is about \$0.70 apiece. Governor Benson's aide has said that when he signs the bill you'll have the ceremony with the veterans present. All I'm asking this Board to do is to take this out of

committee and pass the action taken by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen dated November 28, 1945 in favor of a Certificate of Appreciation; that was Mayor Benoit's suggestion and the Board at that time commissioned him to get costs and get it ready to go and that's all we could find downstairs in the minutes of the meeting. So, that's all I'm asking. Is that too much, your Honor?

Mayor Baines replied thank you very much, Leo, we appreciate your efforts.

Jeff Kassel, 22 Appleton Street, Manchester, NH (Re: taxes) stated:

My comments tonight will be brief, even briefer than usual but it's going to be redundant. I would like to thank members of this Board of Mayor and Aldermen for cutting the budget...you didn't cut it quite enough...I'm told by members of the Board of Aldermen that they're looking at about a six percent (6%) increase in taxes this year and I'm also told that the State has a lot of budgetary problems and there's a pretty huge shortfall. I hope that does not impact the budget of this City because people really can't stand to have taxes continue to be raised the way they have been raised over the last five or six years. We've got a lot of big projects and in the *HIPPO* and I think in the *Union Leader* it was announced that Mayor Baines has a plan for a arts performance center in Manchester and while I would welcome such a performance center I do not welcome the bill. A six percent tax increase this year represents an increase that's four times the rate of inflation, maybe slightly more than four times the rate of inflation...the CPI this year was about 1.8% last year. So, I would urge everyone to think very carefully about all of these projects and all of these increases because there comes a time when people just really get sick of paying more and all you have to do is drive up in the north end and look at how many houses are up for sale. Alderman Roy knows that I'm talking about, he lives in the north end, he just bought a big house up there and is renovating it and he's going to be enjoying those high tax rates too...my realtor who I consulted about selling my house sold her house because her tax rate was \$9,500 a year. There's a lot of houses up in the north end that are costing that and you've got to consider taxpayers. Thank you.

Judith Mertens, 106 Riley Avenue, Manchester, NH (Re: taxes) stated:

This is my first time here so if I act a little nervous I hope you'll understand. I'm what you might call a low-income person. I live alone in my own home and I can't continue to live in that home if the taxes are going to keep going up. Low-income and people on fixed incomes have got to be considered when the taxes are being raised, they can't absorb them the way they're being told to and have to. I'm not a person who knows a whole lot about government yet and I don't know a whole lot about budgeting, but I do know that this is going to become a City mostly for the very upper income people while the rest of us are going to fall right through the seams. People are afraid, they're scared. Last November at Thanksgiving the Soup Kitchen saw the highest number of people trying to come in for a meal than they've ever seen before. They're weren't prepared for them and a lot of them were families that had never been seen before. So, that tells you where our economy is going. All I can suggest is

that priorities have got to take precedence over pleasures, necessities have to take place over non-necessities and we've got to lower the property taxes no matter how you have to do it because we can't live under this strain. I don't want to lose my house and I don't want to sell it. I've lived there for 48 years next month...there's no reason why I should be taxed out of my home or any other low-income person. Thank you.

Mayor Baines advised that if there is no one else present wishing to speak, a motion would be in order to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written communications presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne, it was voted to adjourn and receive and fill all communications submitted.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk